



# Alaska Immigration Justice Project

## The Language Interpreter Center

• 431 W. 7th Ave., Suite 208, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 • Phone: 907-279-2457 • Fax: 907-279-2450 • www.akijp.org

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### Interpreter Training March 2008

Thanks to our stakeholders and a generous grant from the Rasmuson foundation, the Language Interpreter Center brought Holly Mikkelson, a nationally recognized interpreter trainer, to Alaska in March for the first of a series of interpreter training sessions of the Language Interpreter Center.

Ms. Mikkelson is a federal court interpreter and professor of interpretation and translation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. This March, Ms. Mikkelson trained over 300 legal, medical and social service professionals on

the ethics and responsibilities of working with interpreters. She conducted a forum with Alaska Native interpreters from different areas of our state to start a dialogue on Alaska Native interpreter needs. She also met with members of the Foreign Language Department of the University of Alaska Anchorage to start a dialogue about developing specialized language and interpreter orientation classes.

In addition more than 25 interpreter trainees representing four language groups attended a week-long community-based interpreter training session. Along with Ms. Mikkelson, three other certified interpreters gave intensive instruction in Spanish, Korean, Russian and Tagalog, the languages of the trainees. "This

interpreter training opened my eyes to an incredible world of job opportunities! It also gave me the opportunity to evaluate my weakness in Spanish as well as in English, and to realize that it is never too late to study, to improve and to succeed in the interpreting and translating field," said Maria B. Avellaneda.

Ms. Mikkelson was very impressed with the level of the participants in the training. She said we are off to a good beginning for training qualified interpreters in the state of Alaska. Ms. Mikkelson will be returning in July to provide more training opportunities for our community.



Holly Mikkelson



Emma Garkavi, Jacki Noh, Holly Mikkelson and Lilly May Bailey, Interpreter Trainers



Language Interpreter Training March 2008

### Alaska Court System



Stephanie Cole  
Alaska's significant Alaska Native population,

"A lack of qualified court interpreters is a critical need facing the Alaska Court System. A significant number of civil litigants, witnesses and crime victims need language interpreters. In addition, because of

there has always been an unmet need for interpreters for our indigenous populations. Qualified court interpreters must possess, educated, native-like mastery of both English and a second language; master interpreter skills that are developed through a course of study and practice; and possess knowledge about justice system protocol, judicial

proceedings, legal terminology and ethics. The Language Interpreter Center enables the Alaska Court System to pool our limited resources with other key stakeholders to develop an organized system for training and procuring qualified interpreters."  
-Stephanie Cole,  
Alaska Court System

## Anchorage School District



**Carol Comeau** “I am so grateful for the Language Interpreter Center and its services. As our school district and our community become increasingly diverse, it is essential that we have many more highly trained interpreters to assist our students and their families as they navigate the school system, medical and social services, and the legal system. We are a very grateful partner.”

-Carol Comeau, Superintendent  
Anchorage School District

## Thank You!

Thanks to all our stakeholders for their support. We especially want to thank Brenda Aiken at the Alaska Court System, Carol Comeau and Margo Bellamy at the Anchorage School District, Diane DiSanto at the Municipality of Anchorage, and Joan Fisher at the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center for hosting our workshops and training.

-Language Interpreter Center



**Robin Bronen**



**Barb Jacobs**



**Mara Kimmel**

## Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center



**Joan Fisher** “Within the health care system, when faced with language barriers, interpreters are the direct link between the patient and provider and their ability to understand each other and communicate effectively. This is absolutely necessary in order to provide quality health care within our community. It is encouraging to know that the interpreter training workshop held by the Language Interpreter Center is helping build the technical skills and ethical standards of the interpreter profession we rely so much on.”

-Joan Fisher, Executive Director  
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center

## Interpreter News and Information Links

- American Translators Association (ATA) [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)
- National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) [www.najit.org](http://www.najit.org)
- National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) [www.ncihc.org](http://www.ncihc.org)
- Northwest Interpreters and Translators Society (NOTIS) [www.notisnet.org](http://www.notisnet.org)
- Holly Mikkelson’s website [www.acebo.com](http://www.acebo.com)

## Upcoming Training

- July: Holly Mikkelson will be back in Alaska to offer more interpreter training sessions.
- If you are bilingual and interested in participating in the Language Interpreter Center, please fill out a registration of interest that is located on our website [www.akijp.org](http://www.akijp.org), or contact Barb Jacobs at [barb.jacobs@akimmigrationjustice.org](mailto:barb.jacobs@akimmigrationjustice.org).

## Interpreter Insight

“This training went above and beyond my expectations. It covered so many different areas that I never thought a one-week training would be able to address.”

-Sonia Vasconi, Spanish Interpreter



**Sonia Vasconi**

“I truly enjoyed the Interpreter Training Seminar with Holly Mikkelson last week. It was informative and inspiring as well as intellectually and emotionally rewarding. Thank you for your support of the Language Interpreter Center and your leadership in bringing high quality services to our community.”

-Marina Gantz, Russian Interpreter writing a thank you note to Carol Comeau, Superintendent of the Anchorage School District.



**Marina Gantz**

“Thank you for the opportunity to improve our skills and serve our community in a more professional manner.”

-Edith LaFlex, Spanish Interpreter



**Edith LaFlex**